LGBT

LGBT, or **GLBT**, is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. What started under the umbrella of Gay in the early 1970's became a Gay and Lesbian Rights movement and by the late 1980's the letters G and L alternated position with each year.[1] In the 1990's the letter B was added and soon followed by T for transgender members of this community.[2] Activists believed that the term *gay community* did not accurately represent all those to whom it referred.

A six-band rainbow flag representing LGBT

The initialism has been adopted so thoroughly into mainstream linguistics that in 2018 the Vatican used it on official document inviting LGBT-friendly Priests to speak at a conference. It is an umbrella term for use when labeling topics pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity. For example, the LGBT Movement Advancement Project offers services specific to members of the LGBT community, in "LGBT community centers", and there is a comprehensive network of such centers around the United States[3]. The US government uses a different acronym, SOGI, in many ways including the military and for a category of asylum seekers.

The initialism LGBT was intended to emphasize a diversity of sexuality and gender identity-based cultures. It may be used to refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual or non-cisgender, instead of exclusively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.[4] To recognize this inclusion, a popular variant adds the letter Q for those who identify as queer or others questioning their sexual identity. Queer was firmly returned to this community after nearly a century by the first students of the new Millenia but "LGBTQ" has been recorded as early as 1996.[5][6] While the Q is a reclamation, not everyone agreed with it as many still see it as a term of hate. Others chose to include the intersex community first explaining the prevalence of LGBT groups organizing with the extended initialism **LGBTI**.[7][8] **LGBTQIA+** is the other well accepted acronym encompassing the full spectrums of sexuality and gender including asexual individuals.[9] Other, less common variants also exist, motivated by a desire for inclusivity, including those over twice as long whichprompt much criticism on what is referred to as alphabet soup.[10]

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History of the term

By the 1890's the concept of third-sexers had emerged. This was short-lived and quickly followed by the word queer and then pansy. During prohibition there was a pansy craze which referred to the popularity of speakeasy hosts, who already having a stake in the underground world of same sex establishments transitioned into the same role during the roaring twenties for straight clientele. Some of these early hosts, or drag queens, gained sizable notoriety around the country and moved onto larger projects in theater districts of cities like New York and Chicagp. As prohibition ended, mainstream society became very morals conscious. This is when the motion picture industry rating system came into play and actresses like Marlene Dietrich where no longer seen wearing a man's tuxedo. Pansy and everything it referred to where pushed back into the closet. The early terms for *homosexual*, *itself a relatively neutral medical term when compared deviants as LGBT individuals were deemed by the American Psychiatric Association*, carried negative connotations to some and yet still to a few queer men, who may put rogue on their face before taking a stroll, these words were helpfully defining.[12]

LGBT publications, pride parades, and related events, such as this stage at Bologna Pride 2008 in Italy, increasingly drop the *LGBT* initialism instead of regularly adding new letters, and dealing with issues of placement of those letters within the new title.[11]

After World War II a new term came into use , *homophile*.[13] This self elected term came about in the 1950's as many searched for a way to end the discrimination they endured[14] and subsequently *gay* in the 1970s; the latter term was adopted first by the homosexual community.[15] In the years between as the size of self identifying homosexual communities grew, a separation between the sexes also occurred. Lars Ullerstam promoted use of the term sexual minority in the 1960s, as an analogy to the term ethnic minority for non-whites in an attempt to cover everyone.[16] But as he was working in one direction, the more prominent need of a unified lesbian feminist era first took root. While the term Lesbian may be traceable to the 1800's, it did not enter in large-scale popular use until a sizable number of public identities were forged in the 1960's and 70's.

These parallel movements to become accepted as individual members or society with equal standing is a reason the phrase "gay and lesbian" started to become more common.[17] Educating the whole of society was a requirement to achieve that end. Within the women's movement this education hit a roadblock as a dispute came about on whether the primary focus of their political aims shoul be feminism or gay rights. Such conversations led to the dissolution of some lesbian organizations, including the Daughters of Bilitis, who disbanded in 1970[18] Similar debates were also going on in other halls around the country. The National Organization of Women did not want the distraction from their women's liberation goals and they saw lesbians as a heavy weight to bear for their reeducation needs. As equality was a priority for lesbian feminists, disparity of roles between men and women or butch and femme were viewed as patriarchal. Lesbian feminists eschewed gender role play that had been pervasive in bars, as well as the perceived chauvinism of gay men; many lesbian feminists refused to work with gay men, or take up their causes.[19] Every community has internal arguments, but in truth they were both the homphiles and the lesbian feminists were fighting for the same side of one human rights crisis, the lack of equality for all individuals as InterPride defines their vision[20]. During the 1970's and 80s both the gay and lesbian communities achieved significant progress. When AIDS hit in the mid-80's, lesbians where ardent champions and caregivers to terminal gay men right from the start, an allegiance that has not ended.

Lesbians who held the essentialist view, that they had been born homosexual and used the descriptor "lesbian" to define sexual attraction, sometime referred to as Daughters of Sappho, often considered the separatist opinions of lesbian-feminists to be detrimental to the cause of gay rights.[21] Bisexual and transgender people also sought recognition as legitimate categories within the larger minority community.[17]

After the elation of change following group action in the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City, in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, some gays and lesbians became less accepting of bisexual or transgender people.[22][23] Critics said that transgender people were acting out stereotypes and bisexuals were simply gay men or lesbian women who were afraid to come out and be honest about their identity.[22] Each community has struggled to develop its own identity including whether, and how, to align with other gender

and sexuality-based communities, at times excluding other subgroups; these conflicts continue to this day just as race sometimes separates member of this community. Black Pride chapters have formed around the globe and integration is still occurring.[23] LGBTQ activists and artists of the 21st century have created posters to raise consciousness about these issues.[24]

Even though as early as 1989 a few activists in the United States began to use the initialism LGBT[25] it was not until the 1990s within the movement that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people felt respeced under one umbrella.[23] Although the LGBT community has seen much controversy regarding universal acceptance of different member groups (bisexual and transgender individuals, in particular, have sometimes been marginalized by the larger LGBT community), the term *LGBT* has been a positive symbol of inclusion.[4][23]

Despite the fact that *LGBT* does not nominally encompass all individuals in smaller communities (see variants below), the term is generally accepted to include those not specifically identified in the four-letter initialism.[4][23] Overall, the use of the term *LGBT* has largely aided in bringing otherwise marginalized individuals into the general community.[4][23] Transgender actress Candis Cayne in 2009 described the LGBT community as "the last great minority," noting that "We can still be harassed openly" and be "called out on television".[26]

In response to years of lobbying from users and LGBT groups to eliminate discrimination, the online social networking service Facebook, in February 2014, widened its choice of gender variants for users.[27][28][29]

In 2016, GLAAD's Media Reference Guide states that *LGBTQ* is the preferred initialism, being more inclusive of younger members of the communities who embrace *queer* as a self-descriptor.[30] However, some people consider *queer* to be a derogatory term originating from hate speech which had gone on for many decades. Queer was regularly heard in lines like "Oh isn't that queer of him" on the television show 'All In the Family' and many have personally experienced this harmful language firsthand in their youth. This explains the late acceptance of the term queer by middle age individuals and seniors.[31] In 2019 LGBTQ was used in the show of support by many politicians and the Human Rights Campaign on the submission of a new Equality Act written to protect people from bias and discrimination on the basis of sexual oriental or gender identity (SOGI). [32]

Variants

General

2010 pride parade in Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires, which uses the LGBTIQ initialism.[33]

Many variants exist including variations that change the order of the letters; *LGBT* or *GLBT* are the most common terms.[23] Although identical in meaning, *LGBT* may have a more feminist connotation than *GLBT* as it places the "L" (for "lesbian") first.[23] *LGBT* may also include additional Qs for "queer" or "questioning" (sometimes abbreviated with a question mark and sometimes used to mean anybody not literally L, G, B or T) producing the variants "LGBTQ" and "LGBTQQ".[34][35][36] In the United Kingdom, it is sometimes stylized as "LGB&T",[37][38] whilst the Green Party of England and Wales uses the term *LGBTIQ* in its manifesto and official publications.[39][40][41]

The order of the letters has not been standardized; in addition to the variations between the positions of the initial "L" or "G", the mentioned, less common letters, if used, may appear in almost any order.[23] Longer initialisms based on *LGBT* are sometimes referred to as "alphabet soup".[42][43] Variant terms do not typically represent political differences within the community, but arise simply from the preferences of individuals and groups.[44]

The terms *pansexual*, *omnisexual*, *fluid* and *queer-identified* are regarded as falling under the umbrella term *bisexual* (and therefore are considered a part of the bisexual community).

Transgender inclusion

The gender identity "transgender" has been recategorized to trans* by some groups, where trans (without the asterisk) has been used to describe trans men and trans women, while trans* covers all non-cisgender (genderqueer) identities, including transgender, transsexual, transvestite, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, genderfuck, genderless, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, bigender, and trans man and trans woman.[45][46] Likewise, the term *transsexual* commonly falls under the umbrella term *transgender*, but some transsexual people object to this.[23]

When not inclusive of transgender people, the shorter term *LGB* is used instead of *LGBT*.[23][47]

Intersex inclusion

The relationship of intersex to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans, and queer communities is complex,[48] but intersex people are often added to the LGBT category to create an LGBTI community. Some intersex people prefer the initialism *LGBTI*, while others would rather that they not be included as part of the term.[8][49] *LGBTI* is used in all parts of "The Activist's Guide" of the Yogyakarta Principles in Action.[50] Emi Koyama describes how inclusion of intersex in LGBTI can fail to address intersex-specific human rights issues, including creating false impressions "that intersex people's rights are protected" by laws protecting LGBT people, and failing to acknowledge that many intersex people are not LGBT.[51] Organisation Intersex International Australia states that some intersex individuals are same sex attracted, and some are heterosexual, but "LGBTI activism has fought for the rights of people who fall outside of expected binary sex and gender norms."[52][53] Julius Kaggwa of SIPD Uganda has written that, while the gay community "offers us a place of relative safety it is also oblivious to our specific needs".[54]

Numerous studies have shown higher rates of same sex attraction in intersex people,[55][56] with a recent Australian study of people born with atypical sex characteristics finding that 52% of respondents were non-heterosexual,[57][58] thus research on intersex subjects has been used to explore means of preventing homosexuality.[55][56] As an experience of being born with sex characteristics that do not fit social norms,[59] intersex can be distinguished from transgender,[60][61][62] while some intersex people are both intersex and transgender.[63]

Other variants

Some use *LGBT+* to mean "LGBT and related communities".[9] *LGBTQIA* is sometimes used and adds "queer, intersex, and asexual" to the basic term.[64] Other variants may have a "U" for "unsure"; a "C" for "curious"; another "T" for "transvestite"; a "TS", or "2" for "two-spirit" persons; or an "SA" for "straight allies".[65][66][67][68][69] However, the inclusion of straight allies in the LGBT acronym has proven controversial as many straight allies have been accused of using LGBT advocacy to gain popularity and status in recent years,[70] and various LGBT activists have criticised the heteronormative worldview of certain straight allies.[71] Some may also add a "P" for "polyamorous", an "H" for "HIV-affected", or an "O" for "other".[23][72] Furthermore, the initialism LGBTIH has seen use in India to encompass the hijra third gender identity and the related subculture.[73][74]

The initialism *LGBTTQQIAAP* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual) has also resulted, although such initialisms are sometimes criticized for being confusing and leaving some people out, as well as issues of placement of the letters within the new title.[42] However, adding the term "allies" to the initialism has sparked controversy,[75] with some seeing the inclusion of "ally" in place of "asexual" as a form of asexual erasure.[76] There is also the acronym *QUILTBAG* (queer and questioning, intersex, lesbian, transgender and two-spirit, bisexual, asexual and ally, and gay and genderqueer).[77]

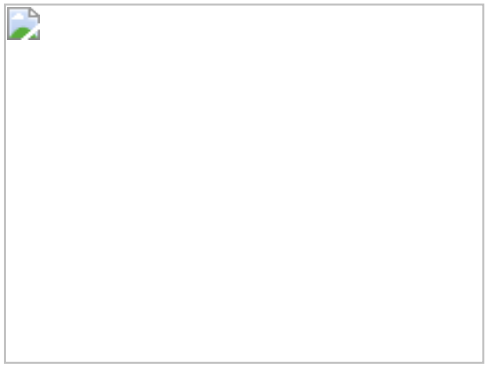
Similarly *LGBTIQA+* stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual)".[78]

In Canada, the community is sometimes identified as LGBTQ2 (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two Spirit).[79] . Depending on the which organization is using the acronym the choice of acronym changes. Businesses and the CBC often simply employ "LGBT" as a proxy for any longer acronym, private activist groups often employ LGBTQ+,[80] whereas public health

providers favour the more inclusive LGBT2Q+ to accommodate twin spirited indigenous peoples.[81] For a time the Pride Toronto organization used the much lengthier acronym *LGBTTIQQ2SA*, but appears to have dropped this in favour of simpler wording.[82]

Criticism of the term

The initialisms *LGBT* or *GLBT* are not agreed to by everyone that they encompass.[84] For example, some argue that transgender and transsexual causes are not the same as that of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people.[85] This argument centers on the idea that transgenderism and transsexuality have to do with gender identity, or a person's understanding of being or not being a man or a woman irrespective of their sexual orientation.[23] LGB issues can be seen as a matter of sexual orientation or attraction.[23] These distinctions have been made in the context of political action in which LGB goals, such as same-sex marriage legislation and human rights work (which may not include transgender and intersex people), may be perceived to differ from transgender and transsexual goals.[23]



LGBT families, like these in a 2007 Boston pride parade, are labeled as *non-heterosexual* by researchers for a variety of reasons.[83]

A belief in "lesbian & gay separatism" (not to be confused with the related "lesbian separatism"), holds that lesbians and gay men form (or should form) a community distinct and separate from other groups normally included in the LGBTQ sphere.[86] While not always appearing of sufficient number or organization to be called a movement, separatists are a significant, vocal, and active element within many parts of the LGBT community.[87][86][88] In some cases separatists will deny the existence or right to equality of bisexual orientations and of transsexuality,[87] sometimes leading public biphobia and transphobia.[87][86] In contrasts to separatists, Peter Tatchell of the LGBT human rights group OutRage! argues that to separate the transgender movement from the LGB would be "political madness", stating that:

> Queers are, like transgender people, gender deviant. We don't conform to traditional heterosexist assumptions of male and female behaviour, in that we have sexual and emotional relationships with the same sex. We should celebrate our discordance with mainstream straight norms.[...][89]

The portrayal of an all-encompassing "LGBT community" or "LGB community" is also disliked by some lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.[90][91] Some do not subscribe to or approve of the political and social solidarity, and visibility and human rights campaigning that normally goes with it including gay pride marches and events.[90][91] Some of them believe that grouping together people with non-heterosexual orientations perpetuates the myth that being gay/lesbian/bi/asexual/pansexual/etc. makes a person deficiently different from other people.[90] These people are often less visible compared to more mainstream gay or LGBT activists.[90][91] Since this faction is difficult to distinguish from the heterosexual majority, it is common for people to assume all LGBT people support LGBT liberation and the visibility of LGBT people in society, including the right to live one's life in a different way from the majority.[90][91][92] In the 1996 book *Anti-Gay*, a collection of essays edited by Mark Simpson, the concept of a 'one-size-fits-all' identity based on LGBT stereotypes is criticized for suppressing the individuality of LGBT people.[93]

Writing in the BBC News Magazine in 2014, Julie Bindel questions whether the various gender groupings now, "bracketed together" ... "share the same issues, values and goals?" Bindel refers to a number of possible new initialisms for differing combinations and concludes that it may be time for the alliances to be reformed or finally go "our separate ways".[94]

Alternative terms

Many people have looked for a generic term to replace the numerous existing initialisms.[87] Words such as *queer* (an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual, or gender-binary) and *rainbow* have been tried, but most have not been widely adopted.[87][95] *Queer* has many negative connotations to older people who remember the word as a taunt and insult and such

(negative) usage of the term continues.[87][95] Many younger people also understand *queer* to be more politically charged than *LGBT*.[95][96] "Rainbow" has connotations that recall hippies, New Age movements, and groups such as the Rainbow Family or Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition *SGL* ("same gender loving") is sometimes favored among gay male African Americans as a way of distinguishing themselves from what they regard as white-dominated LGBT communities.[97]

Some people advocate the term "minority sexual and gender identities" (MSGI, coined in 2000), or *gender and sexual/sexuality minorities* (GSM), so as to explicitly include all people who are not cisgender and heterosexual; or *gender, sexual, and romantic minorities* (GSRM), which is more explicitly inclusive of minority romantic orientations and polyamory; but those have not been widely adopted either.[98][99][100][101][102] Other rare umbrella terms are Gender and Sexual Diversities (GSD),[103] MOGII (Marginalized Orientations, Gender Identities, and Intersex) and MOGAI (Marginalized Orientations, Gender Alignments and Intersex).[104][105]

In 2011 the National Institutes of Health commissioned the Institue of Medicine Report which framed the LGBT community, including others "whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity varies, those who may not self-identify as LGBT" and also intersex populations (including some with disorders of sex development) as a "sexual and gender minority" (SGM) populations with a tangible disparity in their health care. This led to the development of an NIH SGM Health Research Strategic Plan and the formation of the NIH's Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office by September 2015[106]. The office is a trans-NIH control looking at research that may have overlapping coverage on LGBT community verticals and has become a clearinghouse for all the related data. They help identify gaps in research and support seeing those covered. They are a networking interface within the NIH and externally assisting with national SGM conference and other support for researchers in the field.[107] The Williams Institute is one example of an academic body who has used the same term for reports including their international sustainable development goals, which excluded Intersex populations.[108] Others like the Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing at Northwestern have simply incorporated it into the name of their school.

In public health settings, *MSM* ("men who have sex with men") is clinically used to describe men who have sex with other men without referring to their sexual orientation, with *WSW* ("women who have sex with women") also used as a corollary.[109][110]

See also

- Androphilia and gynephilia
- Gender and sexual diversity
- Gender neutrality
- Gender roles in non-heterosexual communities
- Intersex human rights
- LGBT ageing
- LGBT billionaires
- LGBT community
- LGBT culture
- LGBT History Month
- LGBT marketing
- LGBT music
- LGBT people in prison
- LGBT retirement issues
- LGBT rights by country or territory
- LGBT rights opposition
- LGBT social movements
- LGBT symbols
- List of LGBT periodicals
- List of LGBT-related organizations and conferences
- List of transgender-related topics
- Sexual diversity

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General references

- Religious institute Time to Seek
- Safe Schools Coalition Glossary

External links

- Archives of glbtq.com, the GLBTQ encyclopedia
- Directory of U.S. and international LGBT Community Centers
- American Psychological Association's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns Office
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered community (Sociology Contribute) at *Encyclopædia Britannica*

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